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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: TAIWAN'S POLITICAL SITUATION, GWOT,
KOIZUMI'S YASUKUNI SHRINE VISIT

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their coverage August 19-21 on the multiple efforts to oust President Chen Shui-bian, investigations into the Presidential Office's special state affairs expense account, and the KMT's plan to release a party assets report on Wednesday. Almost all papers carried on inside pages August 20 President Chen's remarks to his supporters Saturday that he "will never fall and will finish my term." The pro-status quo "China Times" ran a banner headline on August 21 that read "Patience Has Its Limits; Insisting on Finishing His Term, Bian Fights Back: Will Not Remain Passive and Vulnerable to Attacks All the Time."

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an analysis in the pro-unification "United Daily News" said President Chen's plan to secure his presidency is to embrace independence, cling to Premier Su Tseng-chang, and fire at Shih Ming-teh. A "China Times" editorial criticized President Chen and the DPP by asking "How is a state leader going to lead his country when his own personality and moral integrity are severely questioned by his people?" An editorial in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" urged Taiwan's Foreign Ministry to take a new approach, or better a more radical course of action, to make Taiwan's international position clear, given that Washington seems unconcerned by China's attempt to lure away Taiwan's allies and thereby destabilize the cross-Strait "status quo." With regard to the war on terrorism, an editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" said more has to be done to increase the mutual understanding between the West and the Arabs. A separate "China Post" editorial discussed Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi's recent visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, saying he has missed a golden opportunity to go down in history as a statesman. End summary.

¶3. Taiwan's Political Situation

A) "Bian to Fight His Battle to Secure His Presidency by Embracing Independence, Clinging to Su, and Firing at Shih"

Journalist Lo Hsiao-ho noted in an analysis in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (8/20):

"As the movements to oust President Chen Shui-bian escalated, Chen and the DPP's strategy to cope with these movements also grew clearer and clearer. Bian clung tightly to the independence supporters and canceled Su's revisionist line, offering former President Lee Teng-hui, who is also of the Green camp, no excuse to oust him. As for the DPP headquarters and DPP legislators, they launched a 'fire at will' campaign against Shih Ming-teh's efforts to oust Bian, embarking on all-out attacks against Shih's personal life, connections and political relationships to undermine Shih's

validity.

"For Bian, whose approval rating has dropped to a minimal point, this is the only way for him to protect himself. No matter how many Taiwan elites from different walks of life come forward to oust him, Bian, already dead meat, could not care less. As long as the movements to oust Bian fail to defeat the deep-Green front, Chen will be just about able to secure his position. If he can survive for another six months until next spring, the campaign for the 2008 presidential elections will start then, and no one will be interested in asking him to step down. ..."

B) "[People] Stand Forward to Fight Corruption Just Because They Cherish Taiwan"

The pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (8/21):

"... The biggest misstep [President Chen has made] in terms of estimation was that he seemed to really believe that he still had chances to push his two major lines, four administrative objectives, and three movements during his remaining term. Chen failed to accomplish many of the above-mentioned lines or objectives even when his approval rating reached 70 percent and when the DPP enjoyed its highest popularity. Given the fact that support for both Chen and the DPP have both dropped to 18 percent, it sounds really 'ridiculous' in the current climate when Chen says he wants to 'push Taiwan's bid to join the United Nations under the name of Taiwan,' and to 'craft a new constitution for Taiwan.' Chen is either really unaware, or he simply pretends that he does not know the following facts: How is a state leader going to lead his country when his own personality and moral integrity are severely questioned by his people? How can a ruling party which sneered at morality as if it were a feudalistic idea stand upright to push for policies? ... It is enough that Chen Shui-bian has hijacked the DPP. Do we want to see him also hijack all of Taiwan? ... Do people really believe that Chen is entitled to represent Taiwan and that 'protecting Bian' is really akin to 'protecting Taiwan?' A majority of the Taiwan

people may not think so. For many Taiwan people, they join the campaign to oust Bian primarily because they treasure Taiwan and therefore they want to protect it. ..."

C) "Fair-Weather Allies Deserve China"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (8/19):

"... At some point, as China turns the screws on the dwindling number of countries that recognize Taipei, the foreign ministry will need to take a new approach. Given that Washington seems unconcerned by the destabilizing effect of ally-poaching, especially to the cross-strait 'status quo,' perhaps the ministry might consider a more radical course of action to make Taiwan's international position clear. Do we need an ally if it is incapable of genuine commitment? If the ministry were to announce that bipartisan political support would be necessary for the ally to receive aid, and that cash aid were to cease- replaced by boosted development programs and closely audited transfer of material aid - then what would be the result?

"Most of the allies would jump ship. This would serve several purposes: a lot of money would be saved; long-term ties with remaining allies could be consolidated (including more generous and tailor-made programs looking well beyond whatever electoral apply); there would be a decrease in the morale-sapping unilateral severing of ties; and the 'status quo' would be disrupted so dramatically that even Washington would take notice. ... No diplomat would be so nave as to think that morality determines the fortunes of nations. As a senior U.S. official in Taiwan was recently overheard saying: the mighty prevail and the weak submit. Very true, but there is more to it than this, because decision-making processes in mature democracies are informed by more than immediate military and economic imperatives. Somewhere in the mix there remains a little room for things like patriotism and honor. Their role is not to be laughed at. Taiwan can afford to restrict itself to allies who want more from a relationship than handouts. The rest are welcome to deal with China on whatever reduced terms Beijing allows."

14. GWOT

"Terror in the Skies"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (8/21):

"... And the whole world - except those fanatics and their supporters - rightly condemns terrorism, which, however, has become practically the only means by which they can and will continue to fight the Christian West they believe to be bent on destroying Islam as a way of life. Of course they are wrong, but little has been done to convince them that they are. Much more has to be done to let them acquire a better understanding of the current conflict between the West and the Arabs. Better mutual understanding alone, not the force of arms in war, can put an end to the jihad of al-Qaida, Hamas, Hezbollah and other Islamic movements. The truce arranged by the United Nations between Hezbollah and Israel does not help promote that mutual understanding. Worse, it may deepen the West-Arab feud, prodding the fanatic Islamists to expand their war of terrorism on mankind in the process."

15. Koizumi's Yasukuni Shrine Visit

"Koizumi's Place in History"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] commented in an editorial (8/19):

"By visiting a controversial shrine in Tokyo, which is regarded by many as a 'memorial to Japanese imperialism and militarism,' Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi missed a golden opportunity to go down in history as a statesman. Instead, he is likely to be seen by critics as a bigot, or hailed by some of his countrymen as a jingoist. ... To say the visit is a challenge to international justice is an understatement. It is a provocation as well as an insult to peoples victimized by Japanese militarism and imperialism. The victims' feelings are hurt when they see the hawkish Japanese prime minister paying respects to such notorious war criminals like Hideki Tojo, Japan's wartime prime minister who started the Pacific War in 1941 by attacking Pearl Harbor. ...

"Koizumi's stubbornness is sure to carry a price. Japan's relations with its two closest neighbors will worsen. His place in history will sink and his image will be tainted. The outgoing Japanese politician, who retires next month, can hardly go down in history as a statesman, which is defined by farsightedness, shrewdness, and broadmindedness - qualities that enhance national interests and

world wellness. But his stubbornness, on the other hand, is also admired by like-minded people for his steely will to stand to crushing pressure from Beijing and Seoul, which are not on speaking terms with him. Koizumi, for sure, will be a hero to many Japanese. ...

YOUNG